

## Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /061 W  
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R 240846Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8064

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 0521

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, KS

SUBJECT: REFERENDUM PROCESS MAY CONTRIBUTE TO CONFRONTATION

REF (A) SEOUL 0487 (B) SEOUL 0452

1. PROBABLY IN RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION CALLS TO BOYCOTT  
PRESIDENT PARK'S REFERENDUM, ROKG HAS SPECIFICALLY RULED  
THAT BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN IS ILLEGAL UNDER REFERENDUM LAW.

2. ON JANUARY 23, MINISTER OF JUSTICE HWANG SAN-TOK  
ANNOUNCED THAT "APPEALING TO OR INSTIGATING PEOPLE TO  
BOYCOTT PROPOSED NATIONAL REFERENDUM WAS PROHIBITED UNDER  
NATIONAL REFERENDUM LAW". HE FURTHER NOTED THAT NEWS  
REPORTS OF SUCH ACTS WERE ALSO ILLEGAL. SUCH ACTS WOULD  
BE DISTINGUISHED FROM PERSONAL EXPRESSIONS  
OF INTENTION NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN REFERENDUM, WHICH  
WOULD BE PERMITTED. HWANG'S RULING WAS REVERSAL OF  
ROKG'S PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED INTERPRETATION O THIS  
POINT. (REFTEL A.)

3. KOREAN TEXT AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SUMMARY  
OF REFERENDUM LAW BEING POUCHED.

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4. COMMENT: PROSPECTS ARE SUBSTANTIAL THAT

REFERENDUM PROCESS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO GOVERNMENT-  
OPPOSITION CONFRONTATION. OPPOSITION ELEMENTS HAVE  
BASED THEIR POLITICAL POSITION ON CLAIM THAT PEOPLE  
ARE AGAINST PARK AND YUSHIN SYSTEM. AT THE SAME TIME,  
THEY ARE UNDER NO ILLUSION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL  
PERMIT ITSELF TO LOSE REFERENDUM. THUS, THEY MAY WELL  
CONCLUDE THAT THEIR BEST COURSE OF ACTION IS TO TRY TO  
GUARANTEE IMPRESSION IN KOREA AND ABROAD THAT REFERENDUM  
BEING CARRIED OUT UNFAIRLY AND UNDER REPRESSIVE  
CIRCUMSTANCES. SUCH AN APPROACH COULD INCLUDE SYSTEMATIC  
CHALLENGES OF STRICT LAW ON REFERENDUM CAMPAIGNING  
AND/OR DEMONSTRATION ATTEMPTS IN ORDER TO STIMULATE  
GOVERNMENT CRACK-DOWN. WHILE NDP MEMBERS MAY HAVE  
NO STOMACH FOR PERSONALLY TAKING SUCH RISKS, THEY WOULD  
PRESUMABLY LEND ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHER OPPOSITION  
ELEMENTS (STUDENTS, NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RESTORATION  
OF DEMOCRACY, RELIGIOUS FIGURES, INTELLECTUAL AND PRESS  
FIGURES) WHO MAY BE MORE WILLING TO DO SO.  
ERICSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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